

REMARKS

Applicants have thoroughly considered the Office action mailed on November 19, 2007.

Interview of November 20, 2007

Applicants thank the Examiner Nawaz for the interview. As the interview summary filed simultaneously herewith indicates, independent claims 10 and 24 were discussed in view of Sandvoss. An agreement was reached as indicated by the substance of the interview:

Applicant's representative proposed amendments to the claims (i.e. "when the conference is being set up, receiving a participant control selection parameter having a static display constraint" and "assigning a predetermined weight to an active participant for a duration specified by the static display constraint"). Such amendments would overcome the prior art of record. The finality of the previous office action was in error and will be withdrawn

In accordance with the agreement reached at the interview, claim 10 has been amended to recite **“said participant selection control parameter being received when the multimedia conference is being set up, said participant control selection parameter having a static display constraint on a selection of a video signal”** and **“the bridge server assigning a predetermined weight to at least one of the plurality of participants for a duration specified by the static display constraint....”** Claim 24 has been amended to recite **"when the conference is being set up, specifying receiving a participant selection control parameter for the multimedia conference, said participant selection control parameter indicating having a static display constraint of selecting the one video signal; assigning a predetermined weight to at least one of the multiple participants for a duration specified by the static display constraint...."**

Thus, claims 10-16, 18 and 24-35 are presented in the application for further examination. Reconsideration of the application claims as amended and in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 10-16, and 18, 24-35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sandvoss et al U.S. Pat. No. 5,745,380 (Sandvoss) in view of Hayes-Roth U.S. Pat. No. 6,031,549 (Hayes-Roth).

Sandvoss discloses teleconferencing where the multimedia streams with the highest priority level streams are actively transmitted. In particular, Sandvoss et al. teaches that the weight used to determine priority is calculated from substream signals that are input to a process. (column 3, lines 53-58). As noted in the previous amendment, Applicants note that Hayes-Roth relates to animation and is non-analogous art and should not be combined with Sandvoss. Sandvoss which relates to multimedia streams is not an interrelated teaching relative to Hayes-Roth which relates to animation. Therefore, Applicants submit that there is no basis for combining Sandvoss which relates to multimedia streams and Hayes-Roth which relates to animation. Applicants request that Hayes-Roth be withdrawn as a reference. If Hayes-Roth continues to be a reference, Applicants request that the Examiner state the basis for combining it with Sandvoss.

Assuming for argument that Hayes-Roth is an analogous reference, it is deficient for the same reasons as Sandvoss. Hayes-Roth discloses a method for directing the behavior of an improvisational character. (column 6, line 28) Hayes-Roth defines an improvisational character as "any computer-controlled entity which is embodied in a computer-controllable medium such as computer graphics, animation, robotics, virtual reality, audio, video, film, or text." (column 6, lines 29-34) Additionally, Hayes-Roth teaches that character's activity state is updated whenever the character is directed "to execute a behavior and whenever it receives a perception message packet from the animator indicating that the other character has executed a behavior." (column 14, lines 34-39) One column of the activity state table contains a corresponding weight for weighting the desirability value of a behavior. (FIG. 37, column 19, lines 8-11).

As noted above, in contrast to Sandvoss and Hayes-Roth, amended claim 10 recites:

a participant selection control parameter stored in a memory for tuning a video switching stream behavior, wherein the participant selection control parameter affects the outcome of a weight computation,

said participant selection control parameter being received when the multimedia conference is being set up, said participant control selection parameter having a static display constraint on a selection of a video signal;

a participant state table stored in a memory and indicating an activity state variable for each participant, said activity state variable including values and statistics associated with the participant's video signal and audio signal; and

a bridge server connected to the participants through a network and having a point-to-point connection with the client, **the bridge server assigning a predetermined weight to at least one of the plurality of participants for a duration specified by the static display constraint**, receiving simultaneously the multimedia conferencing data including the video signal from each of the participants, updating the activity state variable stored in the memory for each participant in the participant state table according to changes in the data information and the control information of the participant's video signal and audio signal, periodically computing a weight of said each participant based on the activity state variable of said each participant and the participant selection control parameter, identifying a participant having a highest weight among the participants, and selecting from the received multimedia conferencing data the video signal corresponding to the identified participant having the highest weight for transmission to the client for viewing.

As recited in claim 10, the participant selection control parameter is specified at set up of the multimedia conference and indicates a static display constraint on a selection of a video signal. Further, the bridge server assigns a predetermined weight to an active participant for a duration specified by the static display constraint. Specifically, the participant selection control parameter is specified at set up and remains at the fixed value unless changed by the user. (See Table 1, pages 18-19 of the specification, noted in the previous amendment remarks). The participant selection control variables indicate static values, as opposed to dynamic values, and thus do not change unless specifically changed by a user. They are not dynamic values, as shown in Sandvoss, which change over the time of the teleconference; but rather they are fixed unless changed.

Hayes-Roth, directed to animation, does not cure the defects of Sandvoss. The desirability ratio, desirability value and the activity state weight are neither the claimed participant selection control parameter nor the activity state variable for each participant. Specifically, the desirability rating in column 23, lines 50-65 of Hayes-Roth is dynamic, i.e., changing over time based on changes to the desirability value and the activity state

weight. The activity state weight and the desirability value of Hayes-Roth are shown in Table 37 and described in Hayes-Roth at col. 19, lines 1-10. Although these variables appear to be static variables, they are not variables that indicate a display constraint of a selection of a video signal, but rather indicate attributes of a particular behavior node. Thus, Hayes-Roth does not cure the defects of Sandvoss since it does not teach or suggest the participant selection control parameter as recited in claim 10.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons noted above, Sandvoss and Hayes-Roth, either taken separately or in combination do not anticipate or make obvious the claimed invention as these references fail to teach various aspects of the invention, including for example the static values and a weighted assignment relating thereto. Thus, claim 10 is patentable over Sandvoss in view of Hayes-Roth and should be allowed.

Furthermore, claims 11-12, 18, 34, 35 depend from claim 10 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 10. If, for some reason, these claims are not allowed, Applicants renew the request that the Examiner consider each of these claims and indicate the particular reasons for the rejection, if the claims continue to be rejected. For example, claims 13-16 recite, among other things, determining a shown length of time and setting the weight as a function thereof. The last active time of Sandvoss does not relate to shown length of time so that claims 13-16 should be allowed. Also, the desirability rating of Hayes-Roth does not relate to shown length of time so that claims 13-16 should be allowed.

Additionally, claim 24 recites subject matter which is allowable because the prior art is deficient for at least the reasons noted above. As noted above, amended claim 24 recites, among other things:

A method for selecting one video signal from a plurality of video signals for forwarding to a client, each video signal corresponding to a participant of multiple participants of a multimedia conference, said method comprising:

when the conference is being set up, receiving a participant selection control parameter for the multimedia conference, said participant selection control parameter having a static display constraint of selecting the one video signal;

assigning a predetermined weight to at least one of the multiple participants for a duration specified by the static display constraint;

receiving simultaneously multimedia conferencing data from the multiple participants, the multimedia conference data including the plurality of video signals from the participants;

For example, claim 24 recites specifying a participant selection control parameter for the multimedia conference when the conference is being set up wherein the participant selection control parameter indicates a static display constraint of selecting the video signal. In addition, a predetermined weight is assigned to an active participant for a duration specified by the static display constraint. As noted above, Sandvoss and Hayes-Roth, either separately or in combination, do not set up such a static parameter of selecting a video signal and a weighted assignment relating thereto. Applicants request that the Examiner allow claim 24 or specifically point to the elements and teachings of Sandvoss and Hayes-Roth which make claim 24 obvious. Furthermore, claims 25- 33 depend from claim 24 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 24.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that independent claims 10 and 24 are allowable over the cited art. The claims depending from these claims are believed to be allowable for at least the same reasons as the independent claims from which they depend.

It is felt that a full and complete response has been made to the Office action and, as such, places the application in condition for allowance. Such allowance is hereby respectfully requested. Although the prior art made of record and not relied upon may be considered pertinent to the disclosure, none of these references anticipates or makes obvious the recited invention. The fact that Applicants may not have specifically traversed any particular assertion by the Office should not be construed as indicating Applicants' agreement therewith.

Filed simultaneously herewith is a request for an interview. Applicants request that the Examiner conduct an interview before issuing any further Office actions.

Applicants wish to expedite prosecution of this application. If the Examiner deems the application to not be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned to discuss making an Examiner's amendment to place the application in condition for allowance.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency or overpayment of any required fee during the entire pendency of this application to Deposit Account No. 19-1345.

Respectfully submitted,

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